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CHILD WELFARE IN PROGRESS

CHILD WELFARE
ORIENTATION

Alberta
SOCIAL SERVICES

CANADIANA
APR - 4 1989

CHILD WELFARE
ORIENTATION

Child Welfare In Progress
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INTRODUCTION

This manual and the accompanying material have been designed to assist in your orientation as a new child welfare worker with Alberta Social Services. Other sources of information to be reviewed during your orientation are: the four videos and six Informational Guides on the Child Welfare Act; the Informational Guide on the Young Offenders Act; documents such as the Child Welfare Act, the Child Welfare In Progress Handbook, the Child Welfare In Progress Program Manual; and regional directives and policies.

Consultation with your supervisor and fellow workers will also be necessary in order to integrate this material into your day to day activities.

Please feel free to highlight, underline, fill in blanks, make notes, etc., since this is your personal copy and should be used in a way that is most helpful to you. Although the size of the manual is somewhat formidable, the information it contains is both valuable and relevant. It is not suggested that you attempt to memorize this material; rather, read it thoroughly in a sequential fashion and consult with your supervisor as you proceed. The manual will serve as a useful support during the initial stages of your employment. It will subsequently serve as a reference to identify appropriate resources when more detailed information may be needed.

Your training with Alberta Social Services will consist of a number of components. The first is an orientation to the worksite, the Child Welfare system and your role as a child welfare worker. The second component is the basic Child Protective Service (C.P.S.) Training. During this training you will learn and practice, under supervision, the core skills that are required for effective management of full caseload responsibilities. This training will follow the initial orientation, and should preferably be completed within your probationary period. The third and final component, Enhancement Training, will take place upon completion of the second component, and will address the additional skills you may need during your development to an experienced and fully competent child welfare worker.

The Department is strongly committed to the training of child welfare workers. As you go through these training activities we hope that you will find it a productive and rewarding experience. We would also like to take this opportunity to welcome you to Child Welfare and wish you every success in your new position.

SECTION I

THE ALBERTA CHILD WELFARE SYSTEM

INTRODUCTION

The preceding material provides an orientation to the organizational structure of Alberta Social Services. The following section of the Child Welfare Orientation provides a more detailed description of the major components of the provincial child welfare system. The section is designed to help you to understand your role and duties and their relationship to the roles of others within your office and within the broader child welfare system.

PHILOSOPHY AND PRINCIPLES

The Child Welfare Act reflects a number of fundamental beliefs about the inter-relationships among children, families and communities:

1. Children exist within a system wherein their families and communities contribute the essential ingredients for survival, security and development. Government can have an influence on the environment of children; however, this is best achieved through supporting and encouraging individual, family and community responsibilities.

2. The family, in its various forms, is the fundamental setting for the nurturing and care of children. The potential for children, at whatever their stage of development, is best realized within a family setting. A milieu where the family is respected and held in high esteem contributes to the well being of children. As older children develop independence and autonomy from their families, they still require stability, understanding and support in order to make a healthy transition to responsible adulthood.

3. Families have a dynamic relationship with their community. They effect the quality of community life, and in turn they have essential physical, social, psychological and spiritual needs fulfilled within the community. Communities which respond to this relationship in a positive and creative manner have a significant impact on the effective functioning of families and the well being of children.

The vast majority of Alberta children live and grow within a family and community setting where adequate care, safety and stimulation is provided to assist them in developing a healthy sense of self-worth, acceptance and social responsibility.

Nevertheless, cases do occur where a child's survival, security or development may be at risk. In such cases Government has a clear obligation to protect the child and to address the factors causing the child to be in need of protection. The carrying out of this responsibility allows for an intervention (by persons appointed under the Act) into the affairs of a family for the sake of protecting the child. The intervention must focus on the best interests of the child, while providing support for the further development and effective functioning of the family.

The Child Welfare Act outlines principles to be followed in working with children at risk and their families:

a. respect for a child's heritage and cultural values.
b. recognition of a child's and family's ability to contribute to the decision making process.
c. respect for the privacy of the family and the importance of the family as a social institution of society.
d. provision of an effective remediation of the needs that led to the child being placed at risk.

These principles guide interventions outlined in the Child Welfare Act, and services provided by the Department. They impact on the role of a child welfare worker, as follows:

a. increased emphasis on less intrusive measures
b. qualitative and effective case planning
c. coordination and collaborative planning of services among government and non-government community agencies
d. minimization of the number of children in government care through custody agreements, temporary or permanent guardianship orders

e. minimization of the length of time children will remain in the care and custody of the Department
f. an emphasis on permanency planning for all children receiving services from the Department.

The following sections of the orientation will outline, in more detail, how these intents are implemented within the structure and organization of the Child Welfare System, and through your role as a child welfare worker.

CORPORATE AND REGIONAL STRUCTURE

A number of organizational areas within the provincial child welfare system impact on your role. By gaining an understanding about these areas, how they relate to each other and how they affect your position, you will be better able to determine your role and responsibilities within the larger system.

CORPORATE STRUCTURE

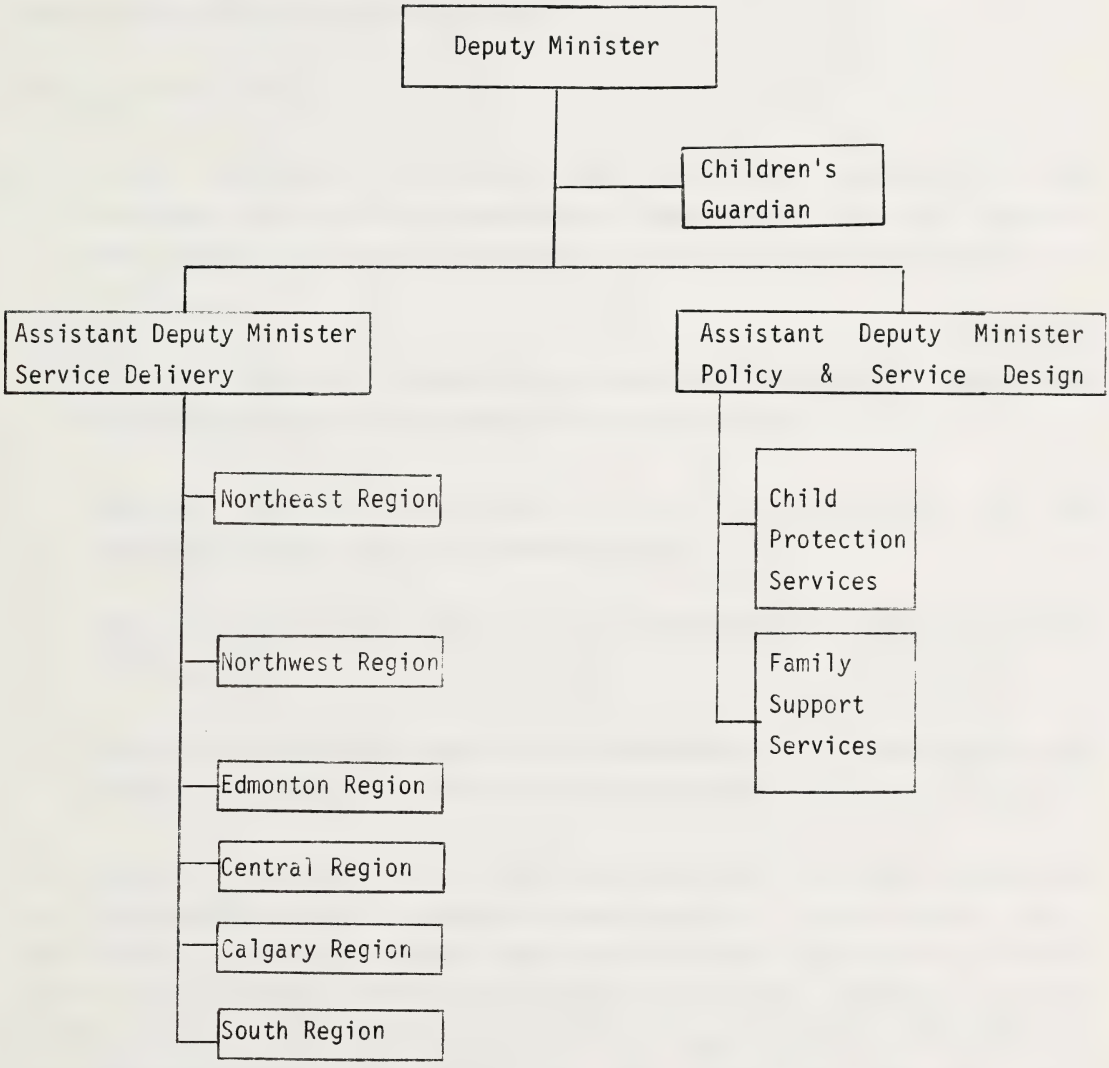
Alberta Social Services consists of a number of corporate and regional functions. The Corporate office coordinates provincial programs and systems, and sets policies and standards. With respect to Child Welfare, the groups that do this are:

- Child Protection Services
- Family and Community Resources
- The Office of the Children's Guardian

Child Protection Services and Family and Community Resources focus primarily upon policy and program design. The Office of the Children's Guardian, focuses on the quality of services delivered to children under the guardianship of the Department, and plays a major role in decisions regarding out of province placements, elective surgery, etc.

The following is an organizational chart outlining the reporting relationships of each of these areas.

CORPORATE STRUCTURE THAT DIRECTLY INVOLVES CHILD WELFARE POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SERVICE DELIVERY



CHILD PROTECTION SERVICES

Child Protection Services receives its mandate from the Social Services Act (Section 9), and the Child Welfare Act.

More specifically it:

1. provides expertise, information and innovative options for the development of legislation, regulations, departmental policy and services which promote and support the delivery of services for the protection of children.

2. serves as a source of leading edge information, expertise, support and assistance to Executive Management and the Minister.

3. interprets legislation and social policy of the government for the purpose of service design and implementation.

4. maintains legislation, regulations and departmental policy to support service delivery.

5. provides leadership to ensure that departmental priorities, goals and principles are embodied in the design of protection services.

This includes initiatives such as the development of: practice approaches (e.g. case planning systems, permanency planning models, etc.), policies (e.g. Child Welfare in Progress Handbook and Program Manual), and supports to child welfare workers (e.g. Child Welfare Worker Orientation program, casework guides). Child Protection Services is also responsible for the design of protection services on a provincial level (e.g. foster care, adoption, child protection, residential services, Native child welfare initiatives, etc.).

FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICES:

Family Support Services promotes investment in, and development of, socially sound and fiscally responsible, family support prevention policies and services that reduce the demand for protective services and financial benefits; and strengthens community involvement and responsibility in the planning and delivery of social services to achieve better coordinated and more cost-effective services that respond to local needs and priorities. A particular focus is on Native communities.

Planning for current services includes: Handicapped Children's Services, Women's Shelters, Family Relations Program, Family Mediation and Conciliation Services, Day Care, and the activities associated with the Office for the Prevention of Family Violence.

More specifically this includes:

a) Promotion, design and demonstration of innovative and community based services focused on family support and prevention;

b) Developing and demonstrating community mechanisms and arrangements for planning, resource allocation and service provision to increase community involvement and responsibilty, and to achieve better coordinated and more cost-effective and efficient services that respond to local needs and priorities;

c) Planning for and assisting Regional service delivery staff to negotiate and effect the transfer of social services delivered by the Department to community control;

d) Promoting increased self-help and voluntary initiative in meeting client needs;

e) Developing effective linkages between social and financial support services to meet client needs in a more holistic and client-determined manner;

OFFICE OF THE CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN

The Office of the Children's Guardian was created in July of 1985, through the proclamation of the Alberta Child Welfare Act. The Child Welfare Act requires the Minister to appoint a Children's Guardian as a guardian of a child who is placed with the Department under temporary or permanent guardianship. (A detailed explanation of guardianship will be provided in Self Study Guide Number IV. You will cover this document in a later stage of the orientation process.) It is on behalf of such children that the Children's Guardian is expected to make decisions, give consents, monitor service delivery efforts, and advocate.

A guardian is responsible for ensuring that his/her wards receive appropriate care and protection. Guardianship of a child includes the following: legal responsibility and authority to make decisions for, to give consent, to monitor the care and protection, and to advocate on behalf of designated children. Traditionally, guardianship has included responsibilities for determining the child's education and religious practices, as well as consenting to significant life events, such as marriage.

In addition to legislated responsibilities, other responsibilities are implicit in the creation of a Children's Guardian. These include the following:

I. ADVOCACY ON BEHALF OF ALL CHILDREN WHO BECOME THE SUBJECTS OF GUARDIANSHIP ORDERS OR PERMANENT GUARDIANSHIP AGREEMENTS

As the court-appointed guardian or as the guardian by agreement, it is incumbent upon the Children's Guardian to be an advocate. The Children's Guardian ensures that appropriate and adequate steps are taken to identify the needs of the child, that appropriate and adequate plans are developed to meet those needs, and that those plans are implemented and

regularly reviewed and, where necessary, amended, all in the best interest of the child. In addition to advocating for children on an individual basis, the Children's Guardian may need to press for enhanced resources or changes in established procedures that impact upon all children who come under guardianship.

II. IDENTIFYING AND REPORTING SYSTEMIC PROBLEMS AND DEFICIENCIES, AND PROPOSING REMEDIAL PROCEDURES

During the course of the work of the Children's Guardian, certain policies and procedures of the Department may be identified as deficient or even harmful to children under guardianship. The Children's Guardian is expected to document details of such matters so that remedial efforts can be undertaken by the Department and/or by other agencies.

III. IDENTIFYING AND REPORTING THOSE FACTORS BELIEVED TO BE CAUSES OF, OR CONTRIBUTORS TO, PROBLEMS FACED BY CHILDREN

When the Office of the Children's Guardian encounters evidence of factors that lead to the need to place children under guardianship, it makes every reasonable effort to identify such causal factors and, where appropriate, makes recommendations for preventive efforts.

IV. RESPONDING TO COMPLAINTS AND REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION, ASSISTANCE AND CONSULTATION FROM GOVERNMENT AND THE PUBLIC

The Children's Guardian is a source of help, guidance and protection for the public, particularly parents, foster parents, older children, attorneys and other professionals involved with children.

V. PUBLIC EDUCATION REGARDING THE ROLE AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE OFFICE OF THE CHILDREN'S GUARDIAN

Print and audiovisual materials are used on an on-going basis to ensure that children under guardianship, children's caretakers, the public generally, and child-related professionals particularly, are kept current on the work of the Children's Guardian. Public education is particularly important because the Children's Guardian represents an innovation from a world-wide child care perspective.

The office of the Children's Guardian has appointed six Regional Children's Guardians (one for each region) and a number of Native Children's Guardians to assist the Provincial Children's Guardian. Most of the responsibilities of the Provincial Children's Guardian have been delegated to the Regional and Native Children's Guardians. In turn, many of their responsibilities have been delegated, through the Regional Directors, to front line child welfare workers, such as yourself.

Additional information on the Children's Guardian can be obtained in tab 04 of the Child Welfare In Progress Handbook and through a number of pamphlets distributed to each district office by the Office of the Children's Guardian.

REGIONAL STRUCTURE

In your role as child welfare worker you do not report to any of these four areas; Your reporting lines are through the regional management system which is responsible to the Assistant Deputy Minister of Service Delivery, through the Regional Director.

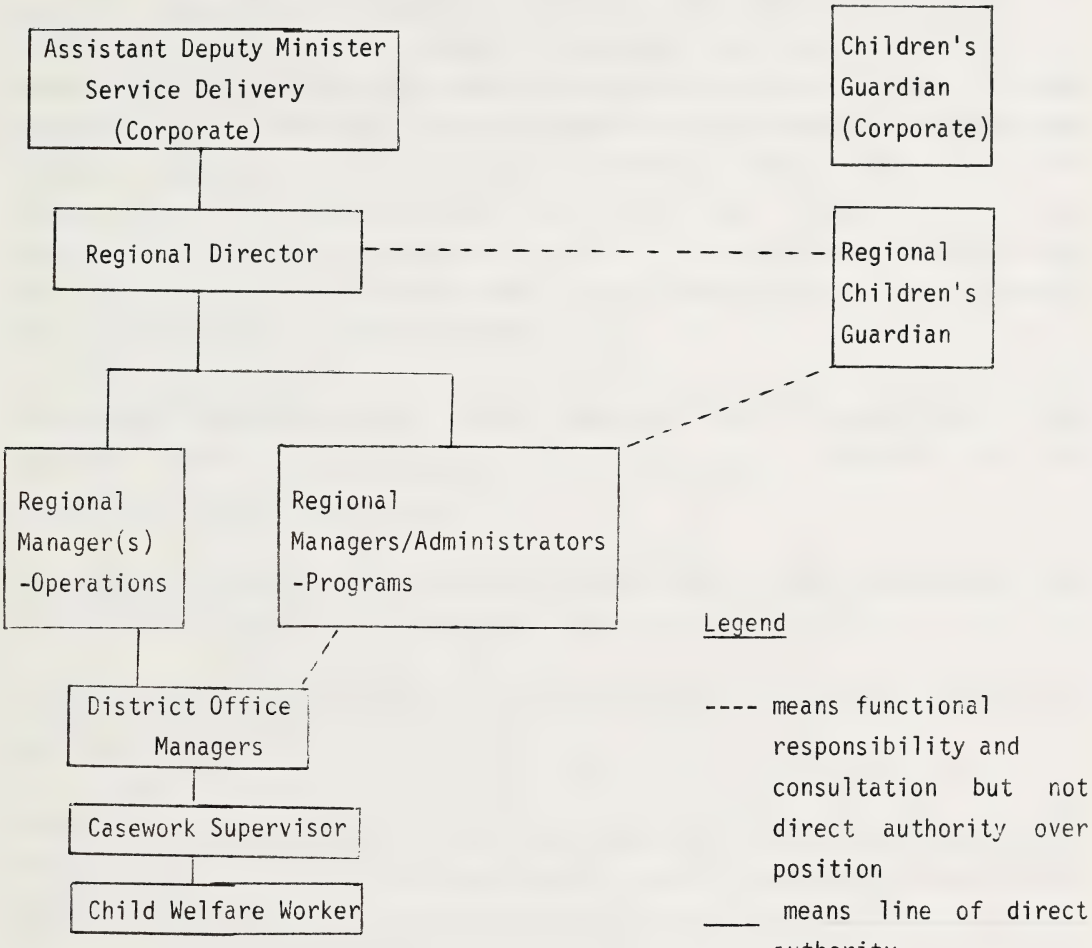
Although each region's organizational structure and service delivery system is unique to the needs of the particular region, there are some elements that are common across the province. With respect to child welfare, each region has the following staffing groups:

- Regional Director
- Regional Manager(s)
- District Office Managers
- Casework Supervisors

Although not formally part of the regional Service Delivery structure, each region also has a Regional Children's Guardian.

The following is an organizational chart that outlines these relationships.

REGIONAL CHILD WELFARE STRUCTURE



Regional Directors

The Regional Director is responsible for the total management and administration of the region. This person is also appointed as "a director" under the Child Welfare Act. As a director under the Act, this position is responsible for the planning, administration and delivery of all child welfare services within the region. Many of the director's responsibilities with respect to the delivery of child welfare services are delegated to you.

Regional Manager(s)

The organizational structure of each region varies in order to meet the specific needs of the community. Although the organizational structures differ, all regions have a number of managers and administrators who rae responsible for planning and coordinating service delivery. Some of these managers may be responsible for the supervision of specific functions (eg: finance, personnel, district office operations) while others may have responsibility for programs within the region (eg: children's services, residential resources, income security, etc.). To assist you in understanding the organizational structure of your region please complete the following, with the assistance of your supervisor.

The Regional Manager who has direct responsibility for supervision of our district office is: _____. His/her title is: _____.

The Regional Manager who has program responsibility for child welfare is: _____. His/her title is: _____.

Other Regional Managers/Administrators responsible for specific components of child welfare are:

Name: _____
Title: _____
Role: _____
_____

Name: _____
Title: _____
Role: _____
_____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Role: _____

_____

In order to gain an understanding of other managers who play an important role in your region, please review the regional organizational chart with your supervisor.

District Office Manager

The District Office Manager is accountable for all administrative and management functions within the district office. In some rural offices this person may also directly supervise child welfare workers.

Casework Supervisor

The casework supervisor has supervisory responsibility for a unit of staff. The two most common are child welfare and income security units.

Regional Children's Guardian

The Regional Children's Guardian reports to the office of The Children's Guardian. However, this position is allied closely with the region. Many of your authorities are delegated from this position, through the regional director.

In other parts of your orientation you will cover each of these roles in more detail. Also included in the following sections of this guide are other support positions such as regional consultants.

SECTION II

YOUR DISTRICT OFFICE

INTRODUCTION

This section of the manual addresses some of the additional things you need to know about your district office that are specific to your duties. These include items such as: access to premises after hours, the Child Welfare Information System, caseload assignments, crisis units, the duty worker kit and after hours access to judges.

ACCESS TO THE PREMISES AFTER REGULAR HOURS

There will be occasions in which you will require access to the premises after regular hours. On these occasions please follow this procedure:

CASELOAD

In your district office child welfare cases are grouped and assigned in the following manner:

The number and type of clients that you will have on your caseload will be determined by:

CHILD WELFARE INFORMATION SYSTEM (CWIS)

The Child Welfare Information System, commonly known as C.W.I.S., is a computerized database management system that you will use to record information on your clients or to access case related information. Each child welfare office has one or more computer terminals to provide access to CWIS.

CWIS been designed to meet the information needs of all Department staff. It is intended to maintain child welfare information for quick and easy access by authorized users at the District Office, Regional Office and Corporate levels. All information regarding the people with whom the Department is involved, and the Placement Resources used for children, is currently on line.

The system provides authorized users three primary functions: inquiry, update and add.

1. INQUIRY:

   The authorized user can view information associated with people or facilities.

2. UPDATE:

   The authorized user can change existing information related to people or facilities.

3. ADD:

   The authorized user can register new people, facilities, or other information.

The system is intended to be used as a tool for field staff to obtain pertinent case information and as a support to management through statistical data for planning and decision-making. In keeping with the basic concept of gathering comprehensive information and using it in the decision-making

process, child welfare workers must ensure that all active cases are updated with the required data as quickly and accurately as possible.

GENERAL INFORMATION

In this office, data entry is done by _____.

Every person who accesses the CWIS system must first obtain a password for entry. The procedure for acquiring a password is:

_____

_____

_____

_____

As a new child welfare worker you will/will not receive instructions on how to use the system. Your trainer will be _____ and training will commence _____. If you have any further questions please consult your supervisor.

CRISIS UNITS

Two regions - the Edmonton Region and the Calgary Region - have special units called "Emergency Social Services", commonly referred to as "Crisis Units." Their major function is to provide after-hours service for Edmonton, Calgary and satellite communities. They also provide out-of-region and out-of-province document service and emergency assistance for people without active files, including juveniles needing repatriation. As well, the Edmonton Unit answers the Child Abuse Hotline for the province.

There is/is not a Crisis Unit that currently services this area/Region.

The Edmonton Region Crisis Unit is located at:

1st Floor, Financial Building
10621 - 100 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 0B3

The phone numbers are:

a. 8:15 - 4:30 p.m. - 427-2822
- 427-2823
- 427-2927

b. After hours - 427-3390

The Calgary Region Crisis Unit is located at:

Plaza 14
811 - 14 Street, N.W.
Calgary, Alberta
P2N 2A4

The phone numbers are: 297-8343 and 266-8849.

DUTY WORKER KIT

A Duty Worker Kit is available in every District Office that does not have a Crisis Unit servicing the area. This Kit is retained by the on-call/standby worker on an after hours basis, and contains all of the materials required to carry out child protection activities. A Duty Worker Kit is/is not available in this office and can be obtained by

_____

_____

_____

Items contained in the Kit are:

- the Child Welfare Policy Manual and Handbook, including the current Child Welfare Act and amendments
- Social Allowance Policy Manual
- Bible
- paper (optional)
- telephone numbers and other relevant information concerning:

  a) approved escort drivers
  b) emergency care givers
  c) supervisory support
  d) District Office staff members
  e) crisis unit
  f) police
  g) hospitals
  h) health units
  i) community resources
  j) taxi cab companies
  k) hotels
  l) restaurants
  m) after-hours access to a judge

- Duty Reports
- Investigation Reports
- Apprehension Order and completed sample
- Application for Apprehension Order
- procedural memos
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Duty Worker Kits must be accessible, up-to-date and well maintained. If any of the above items are missing, outdated, or need replacing for any reason, please advise _____.

NOTE: If you are on call and have a Duty Worker Kit in your possession, please remember to return it to the District Office upon completion of your standby/on call duty and replace any forms you have used. Duty reports are submitted to the casework supervisor upon commencement of the next regular workday.

The procedure for selecting and assigning Duty Workers is: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

SECTION III

ROLE OF THE CHILD WELFARE WORKER AND SUPPORT RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

Your role as a child welfare worker is a broad and significant one. As you begin your career with Alberta Social Services, you will need to be aware of policies and procedures specific to your position.

In order to assist you in adjusting to your new position and facilitate the learning process, this section of the manual provides valuable information in regard to professional conduct, and the available resources within your Region and District Office.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

Under the Child Welfare Act, the Department, and ultimately you as a child welfare worker, have certain mandated authorities and responsibilities to act on behalf of children in need of protection. These are important responsibilities and, therefore, the Department and the child welfare worker are accountable to the courts, and the public, for providing the highest quality of services possible.

Because decisions in child welfare are far too complex to be prescribed purely through legislation and policy, the Department attempts to ensure a high quality of service by employing well trained professional staff. Professionalism represents adherence to certain standards upon which the Department and public can rely. These include:

- representation of a body of knowledge in a particular field, and the required expertise and competency to effectively implement this knowledge.

- the ability to problem solve and make competent decisions.

- the objectivity to assess one's ability to deal with a specific problem, and when required to refer the client to a more appropriate resource.

- a strong commitment to represent the best interests of the client (including confidentiality) and, to advocate on behalf of the client.

- the ability to work as a team member with other professionals and community members, and to enlist their support and resources on behalf of the client.

To the degree that child welfare workers represent these standards, they will receive the respect and support of other professionals and the public. This respect and support is vitally necessary because it gives you the autonomy to make and implement the decisions necessary to deliver quality services to meet the needs of your clients and the intent of the Child Welfare Act.

RESOURCES FOR CHILD WELFARE WORKER

As a child welfare worker, you will be expected to manage a caseload of clients. No two cases will be identical and many questions will arise as you begin. In addition to your supervisor and fellow workers, there are numerous resources available in your District Office and/or Region. The following pages outline these resources and give specific information pertaining to job and/or casework-related problems. It will be to your advantage to know and utilize the resources available to you.

I. THE CHILD WELFARE ACT

The Child Welfare Act was developed to improve the quality of service to children and families in need of help. It reflects a number of current beliefs about the relationships among children, families and the community, and affirms the commitment of the Provincial Government to protect the interests of children who are at risk.

Some of the major components of the Act provided for:

- the establishment of a Children's Guardian position
- definitions of circumstances when children need protective services
- protection and support to be provided with the least possible intrusion into the family unit
- consultation with Indian bands regarding planning for Indian children in need of child protective services
- increased community involvement and responsibility in serving children and families
- establishment of an appeal panel
- more opportunities for children to participate in decision-making

Six Self Study Guides and four complementary videos have been developed by the Department to assist you in learning about the Child Welfare Act. Your supervisor will arrange for you to view the videos and to receive copies of the six Self Study Guides. Each video is ten to fifteen minutes in length and each informational guide is approximately thirty five pages.

Video number one, entitled a "An Overview of The Child Welfare Act", has been designed for orienting community agencies and professionals to the legislation. However, it will also serve as a good introduction for new child welfare workers and, therefore, we suggest that you arrange to view it prior to reading the Act itself, or any of the Self Study Guides on the Act.

The remaining three videos focus on specific aspects of the legislation (e.g. definitions, agreements, guardianship orders, etc) and end with case studies which involve the application of the legislation presented in the video. Each of these videos should be used in conjunction with the Self Study Guide that explains the legislation described by the video.

The six Self Study Guides describe the key sections of the Child Welfare Act in detail, and therefore are to used as the primary instructional source on the Act. Each guide is divided into a number of sections which are usually followed by a series of short questions to test your

knowledge on the key points. Also included at the end of each section is a reading list which directs you to other relevant informational sources. At the end of each Self Study Guide is an expanded reading list, and where appropriate, case studies.

In order to maximize the benefits of this material we suggest you take two hours out of each of your first six workdays to view the videos and read the Informational Guides.

II. CHILD WELFARE IN PROGRESS HANDBOOK

This Handbook contains the policies which have been developed to provide a framework within which staff are able to fulfill the intent of the Child Welfare Act and to respond to the needs of children and their families.

The Handbook provides: an explanation of the intent of the Child Welfare Act, commentaries and policies that support the legislation, an outline of delegation of authority levels for decision-making, and examples of forms required to administer the new legislation.

III. CHILD WELFARE IN PROGRESS PROGRAM MANUAL

The Child Welfare Program Manual contains the specific procedures necessary to carry out the policies identified in the Handbook. Included in the Program Manual are items such as: the procedures to follow when admitting a child into a residential facility, foster care maintenance rates, documentation requirements for hearings, etc.

The Program Manual also reflects the trend toward decentralization and regionalization of the Department of Social Services.

IV. REGIONAL POLICY

Each of the six regions of Social Services have their own policies and procedures. Your supervisor will assist you in locating and becoming familiar with them.

V. DISTRICT OFFICE POLICY

You will also need to know the policies and procedures specific to your district office. Your supervisor will provide you with this information and assist you to become familiar with it.

It is important that you become familiar with the aforementioned videos and readings over the next few weeks. Your supervisor will identify and assign the sections that are most relevant to your position and caseload. A schedule will be drawn up to enable you to complete all of the readings within a reasonable time frame. Discussion and/or question periods will also be scheduled with your supervisor at this time.

In addition to the orientation materials and policy manuals, you also can access other case aids and training materials. These include manuals on procedures such as CWIS documentation requirements, and training aids such as a video entitled "A Child's Account" and a "Court Procedures Training Manual". For more information on the resources available to you contact your supervisor.

CHILD WELFARE IDENTIFICATION CARDS AND DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY LETTERS

The Child Welfare Worker's authority to carry out his/her responsibilities under the Child Welfare Act comes from two sources: a director and the Children's Guardian. A director (i.e., your Regional Director) is given authorities such as receiving and investigating reports of child neglect or abuse; taking agreements; seeking, appealing and requesting review of court orders; and ensuring day-to-day care and custody of a child. The Children's Guardian is delegated the authority to act as a child's guardian when the child is under Temporary, or Permanent Guardianship. This includes:

monitoring to ensure that the child is receiving adequate care, advocating on behalf of the child, decision-making, and consenting to certain actions under the Act (e.g., private guardianship, major medical interventions, etc.).

The child welfare worker performs roles emanating from both of these areas. For instance, you may conduct an investigation and seek a court order, or monitor a foster placement to ensure a child is receiving adequate care. In order for you to have these authorities, they must be delegated to you in writing. This is done through a letter of Delegation. It accompanies your Child Welfare Worker Identification Card. Also included with the letter is a list of the specific authorities which are delegated to you. It is important that you become familiar with these authorities and with the issues that must be referred to someone else for decision-making. Tab 04 in the Child Welfare in Progress Handbook lists the decisions delegated to you and to other personnel in the child welfare system.

Delegation letters and I.D. cards are issued when your supervisor feels that you have the training necessary to assume casework duties.

LOCAL RESOURCE STAFF

As well as your supervisor, there are valuable resource staff in your area who can assist you in resolving job and/or casework related problems. Your supervisor will describe available expertise and identify to whom specific problems should be taken. It will be helpful for you to make note of these for further reference.

Casework Related Issues _____

_____

Administrative Issues _____

_____

Policy Issues _____

_____

Local Community _____

Resources _____

_____

_____

_____

Others _____

_____

_____

_____

CONSULTANTS

There are also several consultants in each Region who specialize in various areas of program delivery. Their responsibilities are as follows:

I. Child Welfare Consultants

In some regions Child Welfare Consultants are available to the District Office for individual and group case consultation, and for assisting child welfare workers to explore intervention strategies for highly complicated and intensive cases. The Child Welfare Consultant's role also involves a teaching component: demonstrating effective pracitcal casework techniques through videos, joint interviews, observation via one-way mirrors; and presenting workshop as requested by the region, on issues such as how to deal with hostile clients or with victims'/parents' sexual abuse groups.

II. Staffing Supports for Foster Care

There may be staffing support in your area to assist foster parents and social workers in providing services to children (i.e., Foster Parent Support Liaison Worker, or Foster Parent Training Coordinator). This may include conducting meetings, keeping lines of communication open between District Offices and foster parents, conducting training and orientation, and doing annual evaluations.

Your supervisor will provide you with specific information on how to utilize these consultants and protocol to follow in contacting them.

Your Region may also be provided with specialists in other areas such as Native issues, child abuse, etc. Your supervisor will know of other resource people who are available.

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SECTION IV

ORIENTATION TO THE CASEWORK PROCESS

INTRODUCTION

The goal of this section is to familiarize you with the policies, forms and procedures involved in Child Welfare intake, investigation and the casework process.

As the overall process often differs slightly between Regions and District Offices, it is not possible to provide information specific to your office. Therefore, this section should be completed by you and your supervisor together. This will be a helpful exercise as you begin to learn the casework process and documentation in your District Office.

The following pages provide a checklist of specific areas of the casework process with which you must become familiar. The areas are not only useful during the orientation period, but will be essential for you to utilize throughout your career as a Child Welfare worker. Space has been provided for any additional areas you/your supervisor feel would be useful for you to know.

Also, since the checklist is primarily child protection focused, all areas may not apply to your specific role. Therefore, in addition, some items may be deleted from the list.

Your supervisor will work with you by providing the necessary materials, instruction and observational opportunities for you to successfully complete this section. In addition, he/she will assist you in reviewing your knowledge of the areas through the use of pertinent discussions and exercises.

CASEWORK PROCESS GUIDE

As a Child Welfare worker, you should have a working knowledge of:

1. DISTRICT OFFICE AND REGIONAL POLICIES REGARDING THE PREPARATION OF MEMOS AND LETTERS.

- ☐ standards and formats
- ☐ recording procedures
- ☐ procedures for replying to correspondence on sensitive issues
- ☐ letter opening policies and routing of incoming/outgoing mail
- ☐ procedures and time frames to follow when responding to urgent requests (e.g., sensitive alerts, red dockets)
- ☐
- ☐

2. PROCEDURES FOR CASELOAD MANAGEMENT.

- ☐ priorizing your caseload
- ☐ opening/closing cases
- ☐ assigning, transferring and referring cases
- ☐ frequency of client contacts
- ☐ organizing your workday in order to allow sufficient time for home and office visits, paperwork, input on CWIS, intake duties, assignments, etc.
- ☐
- ☐

3. DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED, AND DISBURSEMENT OF DOCUMENTS.

- ☐ caseplans
- ☐ running records
- ☐ client contact notes
- ☐ storing of documents and notes that may be used as evidence in Court
- ☐ Regional and Corporate files

- ☐ service of notice requirements and documentation in your office
- ☐
- ☐

4. THE ADMINISTRATIVE MODEL USED IN YOUR OFFICE FOR DOCUMENTATION FLOW.

- ☐ overdue work lists
- ☐ lists of tasks due in the upcoming week/month
- ☐ implications for not completing work lists
- ☐ use of dictating equipment
- ☐
- ☐

5. CASE DECISION-MAKING.

- ☐ issues that should be taken to your Supervisor for discussion prior to action being taken
- ☐ organization of case conferences; including who should attend
- ☐
- ☐

6. PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH CHILDREN "AT RISK".

- ☐ identification
- ☐ documentation
- ☐ reviews and case updates
- ☐ timelines
- ☐
- ☐

7. INTAKE PROCESS.

- ☐ purpose of intake
- ☐ process
- ☐ documentation
- ☐ entries on CWIS and filing procedures
- ☐ conducting an intake interview
- ☐ intake exercise
- ☐
- ☐

8. INVESTIGATION PROCESS.

- ☐ purpose of investigation
- ☐ process
- ☐ documentation
- ☐ conducting of an investigation
- ☐
- ☐

9. PROCEDURES FOR PREPARING AND PRESENTING A CASE IN COURT.

- ☐ information gathering
- ☐ consultation and coordination (departmental, legal, enforcement, etc.)
- ☐ arranging for the hearing
- ☐ notification of parties involved in hearing
- ☐ preparation for Court
- ☐ presentation in Court
- ☐
- ☐

10. SERVICES AVAILABLE TO CHILDREN IN CARE (SPECIFIC TO YOUR REGION).

- ☐ financial services (e.g., clothing allowances, recreational funds)
- ☐ medical services (e.g., Treatment Services cards, Alberta Health Care Plan, delegated authorities)
- ☐ documentation and procedures for accessing funds
- ☐
- ☐

11. FOSTER HOME SERVICES.

- ☐ access procedures
- ☐ pre-placement procedures
- ☐ placement procedures
- ☐ documentation
- ☐ foster parents' role (e.g., involvement in case planning; contact with parents, relatives and guardians; sub-delegated authorities; role with related agencies and other professionals)
- ☐
- ☐

12. RESIDENTIAL RESOURCES.

- ☐ Placement Committee
- ☐ types and locations of institutions used by your District Office (e.g., group homes, treatment centres, secure treatment centres)
- ☐ referral and access procedures
- ☐ documentation
- ☐ transportation arrangements
- ☐ role of the residential resource in case planning
- ☐ follow-up
- ☐
- ☐

13. SECURE TREATMENT.

- ☐ purpose
- ☐ conditions that must be satisfied
- ☐ time lines
- ☐ procedures and documentation required for accessing the service
- ☐ admission procedures
- ☐ transportation
- ☐ role of secure treatment facility in case planning
- ☐ assessment resources and arrangments
- ☐ follow-up
- ☐
- ☐

14. REFERRAL PROCESSES AND PROTOCOLS FOR:

- ☐ mental health
- ☐ schools
- ☐ enforcement agencies (e.g., police, probation)
- ☐ counselling and support services
- ☐ hospitals
- ☐ health units
- ☐
- ☐

15. VISITS TO AGENCIES YOU WILL USE MOST FREQUENTLY IN YOUR CASE WORK.

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16. ASSESSMENT OF COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS.

☐ socio economic levels

☐ cultural groups

☐ power and leadership structures

☐ population mobility

☐ motivation of people residing in the community

☐ effects of climate

☐ social problems, norms, and values

☐ interest in child welfare

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